

Rosta Farzan

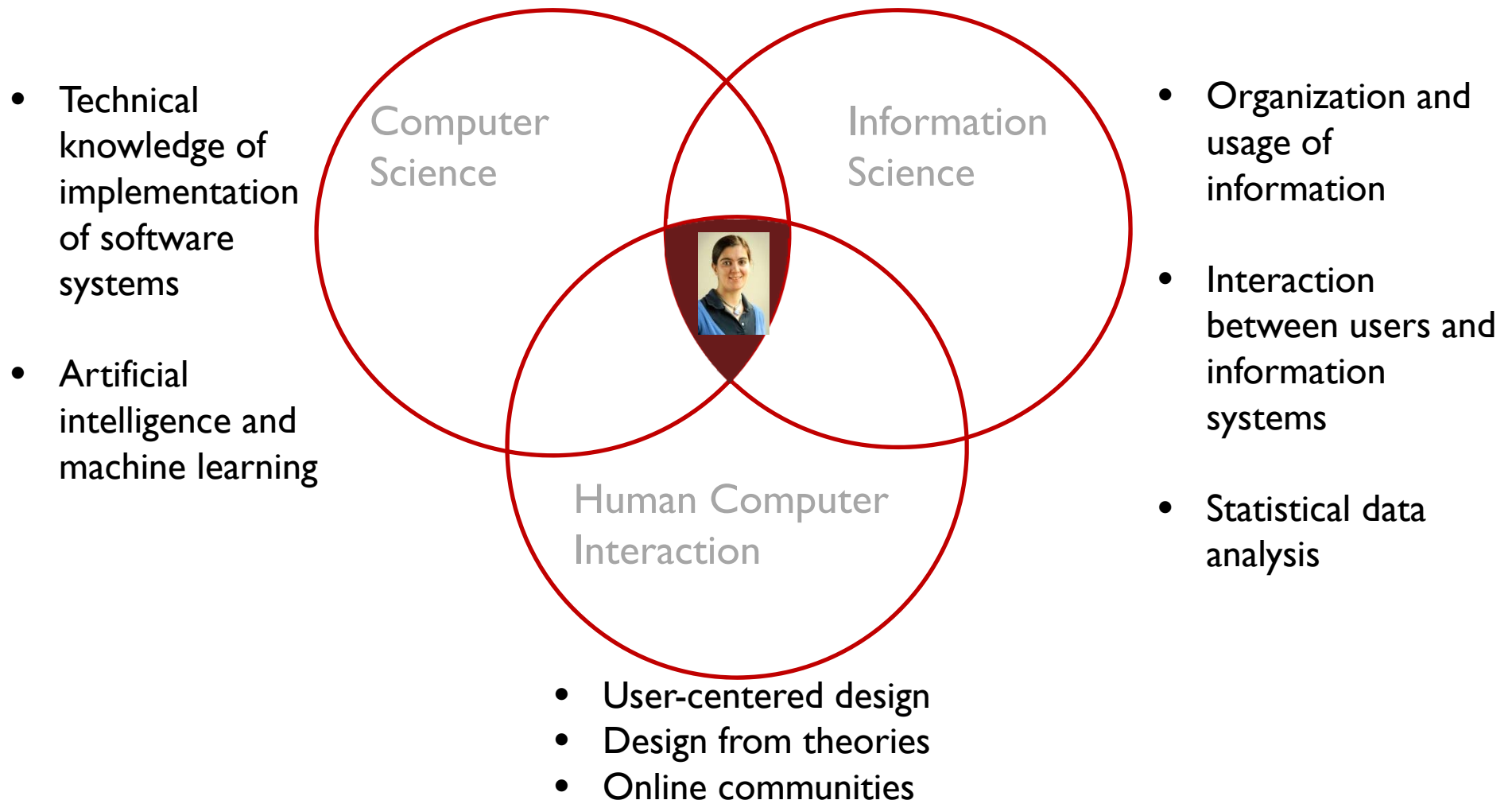


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Research interest: social computing

- Supporting social behavior through computational systems
- Building software that allows people to interact socially
- Supporting computation carried out by groups of people

Multidisciplinary Background



Current research projects

- Socialization of newcomers into online communities, e.g. Wikipedia
 - How to assist newcomers in becoming familiar with norms and rules of online communities
 - How to assist newcomers to find support they need when joining a new community
 - How to empower newcomers to influence a community with their strengths

Current research projects

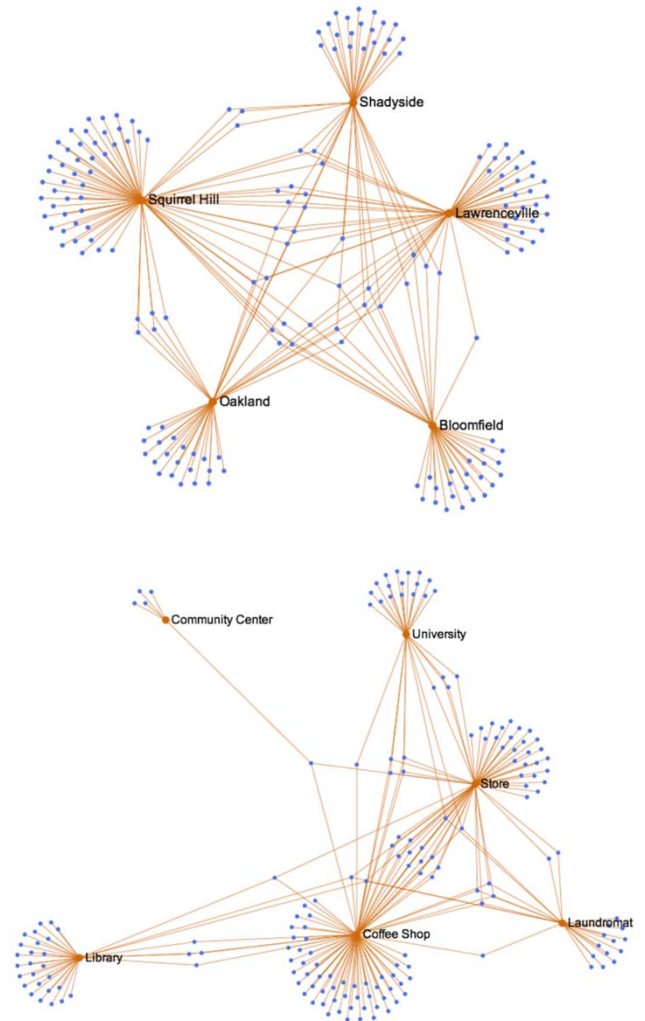
- Understanding hyperlocal online communities
 - In the presence of popular big online communities such as Facebook, what motivates people to create and use hyperlocal online communities?
 - What contributes to their success or failure?
 - How do hyperlocal online communities impact their physical communities (e.g., well-connected neighborhoods)?

Current research projects

- Studying sustainability of local information systems through different lenses
 - Physical information systems (e.g., physical bulletin boards)
 - Online information systems (e.g. social media sites)
 - How local are these local information systems?
 - How does locality influence their sustainability?
 - How do they represent the local environment and culture?

Example: a study of physical bulletin boards

- A sample of 21 BB in 6 different kinds of sites in 5 neighborhoods in Pittsburgh
 - Coffee shops, community centers, stores, ...
- As shown in network graphs, neighborhoods and sites announce events at many unique venues
- Locality influences number of posters over time:
more local → more posters



Teaching philosophy

- Provide students with practical experiences of knowledge they acquire in the class
- My students in *Analysis of Information Systems* worked with local organizations to solve an information system need they have
 - Resulted in several working systems
 - Resulted in internships and job opportunities for students

Neighborhood Learning Alliance

THE ORGANIZATION AND IT'S INFORMATION SYSTEM


Non-profit organization

- Helps lower-income families find jobs and education support
- Established in 2003, as Wireless Neighborhoods, changed in 2011

Integrated after-school programs for students ages K-12

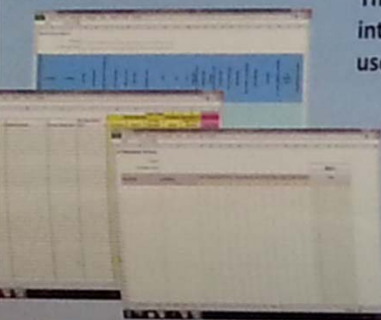
- Began with 2 after-school programs and about 200 students
- Has grown to 15 after-school programs and about 1200 students

Jessica Jacobs, Education Coordinator



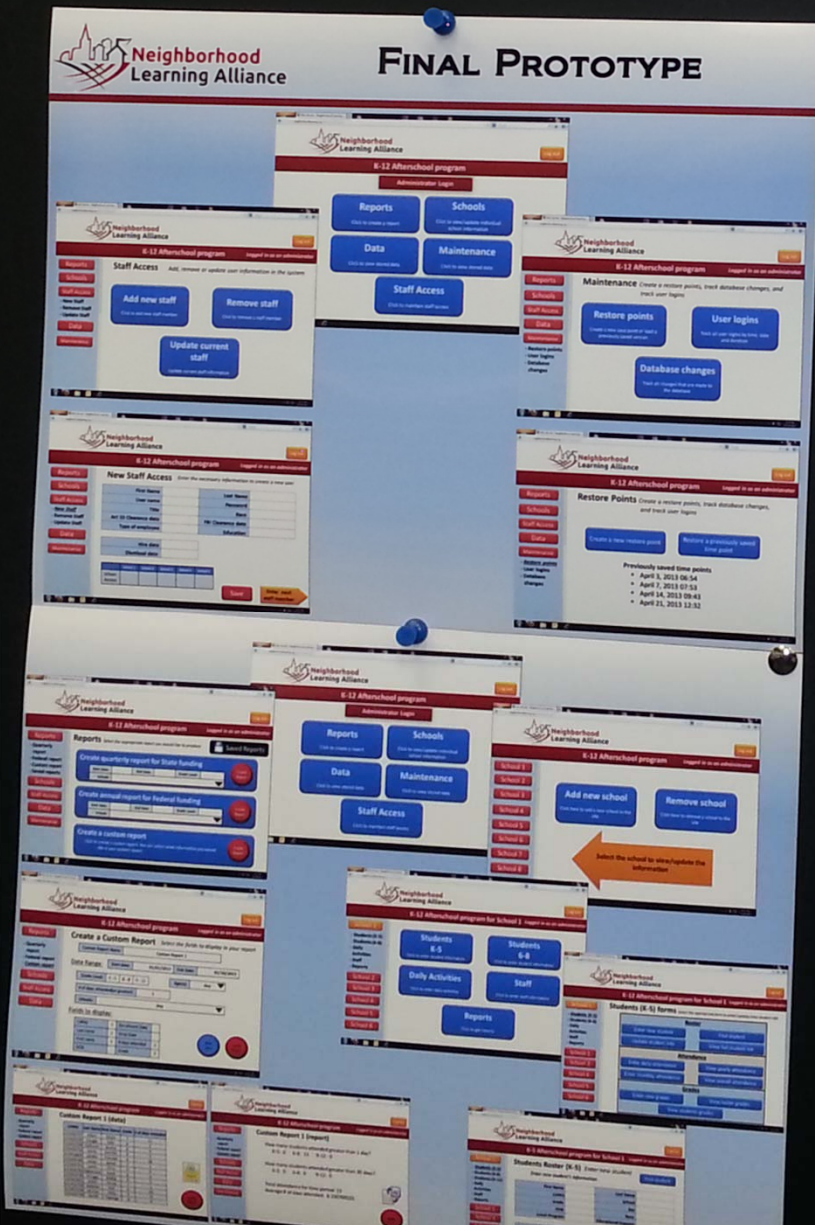
The information system is comprised of three integrated Excel Spreadsheets (Excel version 2003) used to track various items.

- The Activities Tracking Spreadsheet
 - Required to be filled out once per day
- The Afterschool Spreadsheet
 - Required to be filled out once per day and as grades are given per quarter
- The Staffing Spreadsheet
 - Required to be filled out yearly unless people are added or removed



Neighborhood Learning Alliance

FINAL PROTOTYPE



12. The New People, Pittsburgh's Peace and Social Justice Newspaper
(Brian Somerville, Daniel Ropetewski, Mike DeAngelis)

Problem Statement

- The current publication is only available online as a PDF, which limits the viewer's ability to search and view articles easily and disallows the user to share individual articles through forms of social media.
- Current form submission slows down editing process
- Spreadsheet which coordinates editing was not being used by everyone



problem?

Organization & Information System

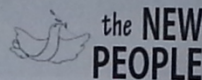
The Thomas Merton Center

- Non-profit umbrella for local grassroots activists projects
- Issues such as war, poverty, racism, classism, economic justice, oppression, and environmental justice



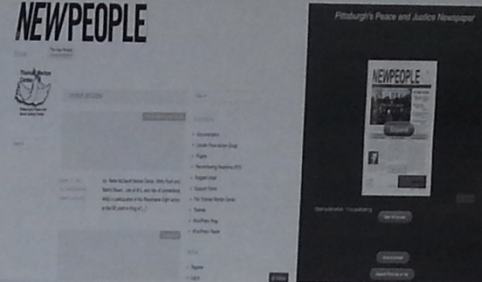
The NewPeople

- Pittsburgh's Peace and Social Justice Newspaper
- Published monthly by TMC and covers TMC's projects
- Currently available online only as PDF

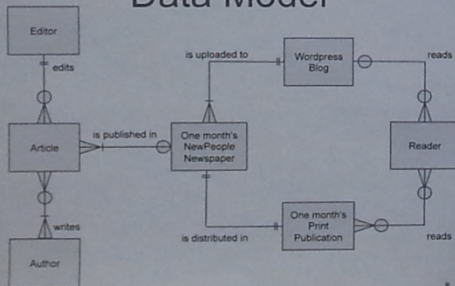


Old Online Publication

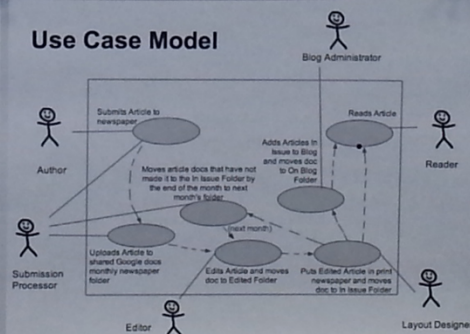
NEWPEOPLE



Data Model



Use Case Model

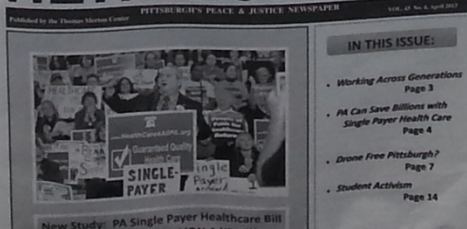


Prototype #3

- The April New People is online.
- All static Lorem Ipsum pages have been replaced with descriptions of the focus areas of the Thomas Merton Center.
- The Wordpress includes a place to donate money via PayPal.
- The Wordpress includes a submission form
- Category menus are approximate, and ready for the summer newspaper intern to edit as necessary.
- The website, now at monarchyweb.com/thenewpeople, is ready to be moved to a new domain by the Thomas Merton Center's new webmaster, who has made another Wordpress hosted by Dreamhost for the main non-profit to organize their sub-committees.



THE NEWPEOPLE



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- PA Can Save Billions with Single Payer Health Care Page 4
- Drone Free Pittsburgh? Page 7
- Student Activism Page 14

New Study: PA Single Payer Healthcare Bill Will Save \$1.1 BILLION A YEAR!!

Recent publications

- Farzan, R., Kraut, R. (2013). Wikipedia Classroom Experiment: Bidirectional Benefits of Students' Engagement in Online Production Communities. In proceedings of the ACM SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.
- López, C., Farzan, R., and Brusilovsky, P. (2012). Personalized incremental users' engagement: driving contributions one step forward. In proceedings of the ACM conference on Supporting Group Work.
- Farzan, R., Pal, A., Kraut, R. and Konstan, J. (2012). Socializing volunteers in an online community: A field experiment. In proceedings of the ACM conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work.

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